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ABSTRACT

The historical development and contemporary research analyses of peer tutoring with normal and handicapped children are reviewed. The evolution from the monitorial system of the mid nineteenth century to programed tutoring programs with disadvantaged students in the 1960's is traced. Benefits for teachers, tutees, and tutors are described. Research is explained to identify those types of children who benefit from tutorial approaches. Among four requirements cited for successful implementation are winning administrators' solid commitment to the program, and encouraging flexible adaptations of the model to meet local needs. (CL)

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Charles Hoffman, M.S.S.W. - - PEER TUTORING - INTRODUCTION AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Transcript of Presentation at Council for Exceptional Children, April 15, 1977

The roots of peer tutoring can be traced throughout ancient history - for the phenomenon of children teaching other children has occurred throughout recorded history and, undoubtedly, before. Societies have instructed their young in the tasks necessary for the continuation of the society - in earlier times, these tasks focused on the physiological and survival needs. More recently, with formalized systems of educating the young, these tasks have focused on the cognitive and affective demands of society.

Bateson has described several "simple" societies in which children are expected to assume familial responsibilities at an early age. Their responsibilities include the teaching of other younger children in the family. There is an expectation that once a child is weaned and walking, he is also ready to assume responsibility in the family.

Gartner, Kohler & Riessman, in a review of early references to peer tutoring, noted several discussions of the topic in preceding centuries. Of particular interest is the reference to John Comenius whose first work was published in the mid nineteenth century. Comenius recommended that the student who wanted to make genuine academic progress should arrange to give lessons to others on a regular basis. He supported this belief with the phrase - "He who teaches others, teaches himself."

During this time period, Joseph Lancaster proposed a monitorial system - whereby children taught other children in the schools. William Bentley Fowle provided educational theory to support the monitorial system. He believed that children who taught other children were in a better position to learn themselves, for they were reviewing materials as opposed to memorizing them. He also felt

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that children could be better teachers than adults, for they were more likely to work democratically with their partner, understand feelings and recognize capacities. Fowle labeled this teaching style "learner focused."

The ideas of these educators were heard by other American educators, who were limited by the economics of teacher hiring. When one teacher was hired to educate the children of an entire town, the teacher often would rely on students to teach others.

Lippett & Lohman were among the first to publish studies on peer tutoring projects in educational journals. In the early 1960's, the Lippetts created several tutoring projects designed to meet the academic needs of students. These early projects were primarily cross-age in focus -- Junior and Senior High School students tutored elementary school students. An additional project was started in a camp setting.

These programs were based on several assumptions:

1. Younger children often model the behaviors of older children - which can be used in an educational context where models are trained in appropriate behaviors.

2. The relationship that tutors develop with supporting adults affect these older children who have been trusted to carry out an important work assignment -- also, within the tutorial context, these children have the opportunity to work on peer relationship skills.

3. Tutors are learning materials more thoroughly than they might in the regular classroom setting.

4. Tutors, through their efforts, can be more certain of their academic skills, affective skills, and interpersonal competencies.

The results of these studies were quite positive. Lippett & Lohman reported growth of both tutor and tutee, along several dimensions following their

participation in a tutorial program. Tutees increased scores on academic interest and motivation. Tutors were better able to work with other students and had a more positive attitude towards school.

Gartner, Kohler & Reissman, extrapolated from this data five types of children who seemed to benefit from tutorial programs. The children benefitting most were those who had: a) experienced previous failures in peer relationships, b) "babies" in families, c) oldest children, d) children who had not had experiences in working with others on an equal footing, and e) students who had never worked with an older, same-sex child. In common among these five types of children was the lack of previous, extended, successful contact with peers.

These early studies were focused primarily on affective rather than academic variables - there was little emphasis on proving the effectiveness of specific tutorial techniques. It seemed quite successful and soon larger tutoring projects were developed and implemented.

One such program, Mobilization for Youth, began in New York in the early 1960's. In this project, black and Puerto Rican high school students tutored 4th and 5th grade students in reading skills. Cloward reported that both tutor and tutee made significant progress in reading achievement - tutors gained 3.4 years in reading ability in the seven months of the sessions. Inferring from subsequent grades, these gains did not transfer back to the classroom.

Youth Tutoring Youth was a tutoring program involving high school aged children in the Neighborhood Youth Corps who were at least two years behind grade level in reading. These students were paid to teach younger, under-achieving children in "ghetto" schools. This program is now operating in more than 400 cities in schools and social service agencies. The successful implementation of this program is built on four fundamental requirements:

a. a carefully developed internship program with refresher workshops for tutors, administrators, supervisors and other personnel,

b. the winning of a solid commitment to the program on the part of administrators,

c. the assignment of a specific person who will have as his major responsibility the carrying out of the program at the local level; and

d. the encouragement of flexible modification of the Youth Tutoring Youth design to make it applicable to specific local conditions.

Tutors experienced gains in reading scores; however, more important were the gains in interest for academic tasks that the tutors developed as they became "hooked" into the tutor role.

Several variations of the program evolved. In the St. Louis program, the tutors were underachieving junior high school students who returned to their former elementary schools to tutor younger children. Gartner & Reissman report that placing their underachieving tutors in the school they formerly attended did much to reinforce them. Teachers who remembered these students as discipline problems saw them in a different light.

In Cleveland, fatherless boys were used as tutors in order that they might form a relationship with younger boys who were also fatherless - the program concentrated on trying to build a good male relationship between two groups of boys.

In Ocean Hill - Brownsville, N.Y., a program was developed to utilize "disruptive" fifth graders as tutors for 2nd grade students. The tutors made significant gains in their own classroom behavior.

A well run Youth Teaching Youth program presents a convincing model of how school could be different, reports Gartner & Reissman, for there is no teaching,

no negative, self-fulfilling prophecies. Everyone is expected to learn.

The Each One Teach One program, conducted in Yonkers, N.Y., was school-wide in scope. Students were both tutored and received tutoring throughout most of the day. The goals of this program were both affective and academic. They included increases in classroom skills, improvements in self-concept and self-esteem, improvements in peer relationships, and improvements in individualized attention to the needs of students. The research findings were quite positive -- the initially shy, withdrawn child became more active in peer relationships after working as a tutor. Children were able to learn through tutoring, and to become more encouraged in their abilities to perform academically.

Another program, sponsored by the Hunter College in New York City involved education students tutoring 10-year olds; and these 10-year olds then tutoring 7-year olds. The program was successful, with four major benefits resulting: two sets of students were receiving tutorial assistance; the self-esteem of the 10-year olds who served as tutors increased due to their ability to experience success in a learning environment; the regular teacher's work load was reduced; the college students were provided the opportunity to observe a practical learning situation. With this background, the students would have a more reality-based grasp on the dynamics of learning arrangements.

Ellson and his colleagues at the University of Indiana published two studies in the 1960's on the programmed tutoring approach. He differentiated programmed tutoring from directed tutoring. In these studies, directed tutoring implied a set of activities and materials that were structured so that a person of average academic background could conduct a tutorial session with a student. Programmed tutoring, on the other hand, involves close control of the behavior of both tutor and tutee. Very strict guidelines are set for both manner of teaching as well as content of the teaching. What is to be taught is specified,

as well as is the manner in which materials are to be presented. The tutors in the Ellson program were well-trained in the specifics of work procedures.

The major findings in these studies endorse the potential of the programmed tutoring approach, as well as provide information on the potential weaknesses of the directed approach. In this study, directed tutoring had no apparent significant impact on the reading achievement of the students. Students at all academic ability levels benefited from the programmed tutoring. Ellson maintained that for any type of tutoring to be effective, it had to be held in conjunction with a strong classroom program in the same subject area.

Ellson proposed that the programmed approach had many advantages over other types of tutoring. It can be taught quickly to volunteer adults; and, because materials are highly structured, there can be little variation in the manner in which materials are presented to learners. The type of structure given to materials in programmed tutoring can be examined in the Ellson article listed in the bibliography.

Recent studies in peer tutoring have been conducted with possibly every combination of cross grade and age pairings, and with innumerable variations of other factors. Additional studies have investigated the effect of the tutor's achievement and intellectual level on the outcome of tutoring sessions.

Gartner & Colleagues have placed peer tutoring within a broader continuum of activities in which students help other students in the classroom. These investigators reported observing one-to-one interactions between children in the classroom, children working as "big brother" and "big sister" to other students, and assuming a variety of roles responsive to the academic and affective needs of their peers. All of these can be described as peer tutorial in intent.

Teachers profit from the introduction of tutors in a variety of ways - as can be gleaned from references in the literature. The classroom teacher is freed to work as a manager of learning in the classroom by assigning certain

students the responsibility of directing instructional arrangements with other students. Gartner, et.al. (1961) wrote that the teacher can use the extra time to plan lessons, to consult with other staff on instructional matters, and to program materials for future tutorial sessions.

Benefits for the tutor can be extensive. In fact, certain educators believe that benefits for the tutor can outweigh in importance benefits for the child being tutored. For the tutee, the child receives increased individual attention, greater closeness and contact with the instructional agent, more immediate and frequent feedback on performance, and a peer model to emulate. This modeling factor may be one of the most powerful change-inducing factors in the peer tutorial model. Children are able to observe another student who remains focused on the academic materials, who approaches the learning of materials in a calm and competent manner, and who is interested in helping the tutee learn. The child being tutored and observing the tutor should be able to grasp the instructional component of the tutoring and to acquire the learning behaviors of the partner. These skills can be transferred to the regular classroom to enable the tutee to experience greater academic success.

The child may be more relaxed with a peer tutor, and thus better able to concentrate on learning materials. A number of studies support this contention.

Gains experienced by the children being tutored have been reported to transfer to the regular classroom. (Gartner, et.al., 1971).

Gains in self-concept also have been reported for tutees who have recently completed a tutorial program. Ross (1972), in a program that required students labeled "disadvantaged" to tutor similarly classified students. reported that gains in reading scores and self-concept followed a semester long program of peer tutoring. Greatest gains were experienced by tutors who had themselves been tutees in previous semesters, and by their tutees. Overall, students made

better reading and self-concept gains when acting as tutors than when acting as tutees.

April 15, 1977

Session 377 Title: Peer Tutoring with the Exceptional Child: A guide to Individualized Instruction

Paper Title: Peer Tutoring: An Introduction

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I. Historical Perspectives: "He who teaches, learns!"

II. Early Peer Tutoring Models

A. The Lippett & Lohman Projects

1. Focus on affective rather than academic variables — some assumptions made:

a. Younger children often model behaviors of older children
b. Tutors are likewise affected by the adult support team
c. Tutors learn materials more thoroughly
d. Tutors, through their work, can become more certain of academic skills and interpersonal competencies

2. Five types of children who benefit from tutorial programs

a. Those who have experienced previous failures in relating to peers
b. "Babies" in families
c. Oldest children
d. Children without experience in working with others on an equal footing
e. Students who have never worked with an older, same-sex, child

B. Mobilization for Youth

C. Youth Tutoring Youth

1. Successful implementation of program built upon four requirements:

   a. Carefully developed internship program with refresher workshops
   b. Winning a solid commitment to program on the part of administrators
   c. Assignment of one person who will be primarily responsible for program at the local level
   d. Encouragement of flexible adaptations of model to meet local needs

2. Variations of Youth Tutoring Youth programs

D. Other Peer Tutoring Studies

III. Programmed Tutoring vs. Directed Tutoring

IV. Recent Peer Tutoring Studies

A. Movement into Broader Areas of Activity

B. Benefits for Teachers

C. Benefits for Tutors and Tutees

D. Same-age Tutoring Studies

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